

Trail Rules

- stay on boardwalk and paved trails.
- do not feed or tease animals. Wild animals should never associate humans with food.
- food and drink other than water bottles are not allowed on trails.
- leave plants and animals as you find them. Do not pick flowers, dig up plants, or collect animals.
- leave your pets at home. Pets are not allowed on trails; leaving unattended animals in vehicles is prohibited.

Trail Tips

- in hot weather, drink plenty of water and use sunscreen.
- avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellent and wearing long pants and long sleeves.
- watch your step! Fire ants, poison ivy, and snakes are found throughout the preserve, so give them plenty of room.
- hiking trails may be impassable or muddy during periods of heavy rain.
- don't get locked in! Gated parking lots are open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. If you plan to be on the trails after hours, park outside the gate, safely off the highway.
- if possible, lock valuables in trunk, or at least put them out of sight.

Canoe Tips

- ask for the canoeing information sheet at the visitor center.
- canoe launches are at Twin Canals, near the Environmental Education Complex, and at the intersection of Highway 301 and Lower Kenta Canal. There is a canoe dock at the end of Marsh Overlook Trail; food is not allowed on the dock or trail.
- canoeing under the highway between Bayou Coquille to Bayou des Familles requires a reading of 1.5 on the water marker located under the highway bridge on the northwest side.

Emergencies: Call 911. The preserve address is 6588 Barataria Blvd. Nearest hospital is West Jefferson Medical Center near Barataria Blvd. and the Westbank Expressway.

Other problems or questions: contact the visitor center at 504-589-2330 ext. 10.

Paved and Boardwalk Trails

Bayou Coquille Trail Length: 0.5 miles (0.8 km) one way. Wheelchair accessible. Access: Bayou Coquille Trail Parking Area. This trail is one of the preserve's most diverse. It begins on high ground deposited by flooding from Bayou des Familles, once a major tributary of the Mississippi River. An American Indian village was here c. 200-600 A.D. As the trail descends, walk through hardwood forest with live oak trees, stands of dwarf palmettos, the swamp with its baldcypress trees, and finally the freshwater marsh's floating prairie of grasses and aquatic plants.

Marsh Overlook Trail Length: 0.4 miles (0.7 km) one way. Access: Bayou Coquille Trail. This continuation of Bayou Coquille Trail sits atop a bank formed by dredged material from Kenta Canal. Originally used for irrigation and drainage of plantation fields, the canal was deepened and widened in the late 1800s so loggers could gain access to the baldcypress swamp. This is a good place to see American alligators on warm days. The platform at trail's end overlooks the marsh, a nursery for shrimp, crabs, oysters, and fish, and a habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, and deer, otter, nutria, and other mammals.

Visitor Center Trail Length: 0.25 mi. one way. Wheelchair accessible. Access: Visitor Center. This trail meanders through hardwood forest and baldcypress swamp to a stand of giant cutgrass. It ends on the edge of the freshwater floatant marsh, one of the most productive ecosystems on earth.

Palmetto Trail Length: 0.9 miles (1.5 km) one way. Wheelchair accessible. Access: Visitor Center or Bayou Coquille Trail Parking Area. This trail connects the visitor center with the Bayou Coquille Trailhead. Part of the trail sits atop an old man-made levee that separated plantation fields from swamp. Subsidence, the gradual sinking of the delta, is evident from dead and dying oak trees, a sign that this land was once much higher and dryer.

Ring Levee Trail Length: 1.2 miles (2 km) round trip. Access: Pecan Grove Parking Area near picnic area. Like the Bayou Coquille Trail, this trail descends through several vegetation zones, though here forest and swamp are much denser. The trail sits atop an abandoned oil exploration road built about 1960. You may see the remains of a circular dirt levee built to contain a drill site. Watch for armadillos, painted turtles, and otters.

Wood Duck Trail Length: 0.4 miles (0.7 km) one way. Access: Pecan Grove Parking Area near picnic area. The colorful male wood duck is a favorite for local woodcarvers. Look for it nesting in tree cavities or in the ponds near the trail's end.

Plantation Trail Length: Loop A--1.8 miles (2.9 km) round trip; Loop B--1.4 miles (2.3 km) round trip. Access: Pecan Grove Parking Area. This quiet walk through bottomland and levee ridge forest takes you along a series of old roadbeds: the old Christmas Plantation Road, the old Barataria Road which linked settlements along the Mississippi River and Bayou Barataria in the 1800s and early 1900s, an old railroad bed from about 1900, and a 1910 subdivision road, the Pecan Grove Road.

Old Barataria Trail Length: 1.4 miles (2.3 km) round trip. Access: Pecan Grove Parking Area in picnic area. This trail is often overgrown as vegetation reclaims the edges of the old Bayou des Familles riverbed. The

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